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WHY ARE YOU ?

Christ tells us that at his return, he will separate the “sheep” from the “goats.”

The sheep will inherit the kingdom of God; the goats will ultimately depart “into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels” (Matthew 25:31-41).

You and I will one day stand before the judgment seat of Christ, says Romans 14:10. We will answer for all aspects of our lives (II Corinthians 5:10).

In this supremely important

parable, Christ explains the basis for his judgment. So let's see why Christ separates sheep from goats.

Look similar—behave differently

“In most Western countries, the problem of dividing sheep from goats . . . would never arise, for flocks are unlikely to mix and the two species are not easily confused. This is not so, however, in many lands around Palestine, where they often run together and native breeds may be alike in size, color, and shape” (“Goat,” *Zondervan Encyclopedia of the*

Bible, page 741). Goats and sheep can be considered cousins. They are, so to speak, members of the same “tribe.”

“There is a difference of only six in the number of chromosomes between domestic sheep and goats. If you think goats have

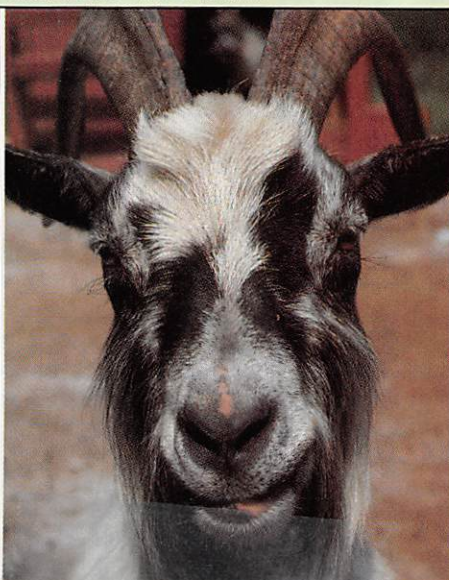
Why does Christ separate the righteous as sheep, and the wicked as goats? Which best describes you?

By David

Craig Clark



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Good News

Can you tell the difference? The photo at far left shows a Rocky Mountain goat; at left is a bighorn sheep. Below, from left, sheep, goat, sheep, goat, sheep. Christ clearly differentiated between spiritual sheep, who will inherit his coming kingdom, and spiritual goats, who face eternal death in the lake of fire!

short hair, and sheep have long fleece, then the Angora goats, which produce mohair, and the hair sheep, which have no wool, are bound to confuse you.... While the size and skeletal structure of these cousins often appear to be similar, their behavior could

hardly be more unlike" ("The Exemplary, Admirable Goat," *Smithsonian*, December 1982, page 115).

The Bible mentions sheep many times. The sheep represents gentleness and loyalty (II Samuel 12:3), patience (Psalm 44:22) and meekness (Isaiah 53:7).

Sheep and shepherd enjoy a close and intimate relationship of trust, dependence and submission. Notice how Christ describes the special relationship between sheep and shepherd in John 10:3-4: "And the sheep hear his [the shepherd's] voice; and he calls his

own sheep by name and leads them out... and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice."

Now let's look at the goats.

Jeremiah describes the behavior of the he-goats in the flock in his prophecy regarding the nation of Judah coming out of Babylonian captivity:

"Flee out of Babylon... and be like the goats that lead the flock" (Jeremiah 50:8, New International Version).

Goats don't follow. They push their way to the front of the flock as they are being led out to graze.

There are advantages in being at the head of the flock. You get

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